

Dean Village News

Issue 182 March 2019
www.deanvillage.org

Dean Village Association – the early 80s

Major building work was getting under way. In the Sunbury area office- and house-building were being carried out concurrently. The Edwardian façade of Sloan's garage had been retained, the building was being converted into offices, with a large extension being built, sloping down towards Belford Mews. A car park for the offices was included, which would be available to visitors to the residents out of office hours. Town houses were going up by the riverside. The plans included a footbridge across the river to the waterside footpath. To get to Dean Village it was necessary to go up the steps above the weir to Dean Path and then down the Convening Court steps. The Health and Safety Executive were due to move into the offices and the first houses were occupied by the end of 1982.

On the tannery site, all land between Dean Path and the river at the end of Damside had been sold to Smart's by Weir Construction. Smart's had been granted permission to build according to their plans providing that a) retaining walls were of rubble stone, b) roofs were to be of natural slate and natural red clay pantiles and c) a public footpath was to be formed along the bank of the Water of Leith. Some demolition had started, but the developers seemed unwilling to accept these conditions, so they might submit new plans, or sell on.

Included in the area sold to Smart's was Burnside's shop at the top of

the slope past Well Court facing down to the river. Following the death of the owner, the shop had closed. The Dean Village Association requested the Scottish Development Department (Historic Buildings branch) to include the shop as a listed building. Under the shabby render there was a decent stone building which could enhance the view along Damside, and act as a pivot between the old village and the new houses on the tannery site. But the shop did not meet the standard of merits required, and the Conservation Area gave it some protection. The developers had no plans to develop the shop.

In the summer of 1982 all land between Belford Road and the river, which included the High Green and Hawthorn Terrace had been sold by the City of Edinburgh to McTaggart and Mickel, who had still to submit plans. A debate ensued as to giving a name for the road which will replace the brae up the High Green, the slope running from the river up to Belford Road. In the past it has been referred to as Leith Brae, “The Laigh Brae “ or even “The Stinking Brae”.

There were other naming issues. There were originally steps between Dean Path and Damside west of the Convening Court steps. They were referred to as the “Broad Stairs”. They had been closed off since 1962. But the steps up past the Drumsheugh Baths up to Belford Road were also called “Broad Stairs”. Odd that the same name was used for both, but maybe it was just a general term. The DVA had asked the Planning Department that this name be formally adopted for the latter.

Then there was the “Scanners” or “Scanner’s” Court. Was this the name for the lane from Damside down to the river?

And “The Square”. This was the name that long-term residents of Dean gave to the area in front of West Mill. In the past, various events had been held there. Owners Link Housing had beautifully paved the area with setts when they turned the mill into flats, giving the impression that the area belonged to them. The Highways Department regarded the area as part of West Mill Lane and therefore in the public domain. After a dispute about who had the right to park, a yellow line was painted to show public use.

Modernisation of Well Court had brought a proliferation of vents, holes

and pipes, not all discreetly hidden. Well Court was an “A” listed building, Dean Path Buildings were on list “B”. All were due for upgrading according to the 1985 Housing Action Plan. There were generous grants to owners. But any work was unlikely to start before the Well Court centenary in 1984. One owner was granted permission to form two flats from the wash-house on the west side of the Court, and to renovate flat 51.

Well Court garden had had an interesting new addition – a font from Sydney Mitchell’s Belford Church at the corner of Douglas Gardens (*now a hostel. Ed*). The font had been in danger of becoming damaged when the Church was transformed into Hillside School. Made of red sandstone, it was originally part of the Dean Free Church built after the Disruption in 1843 at the east end of Belford Road. The children of that church gave it to the new church in 1889.

The riverside path was being formed piecemeal. The section in the village awaited action by Smart’s or their successor. The walkway was to be extended under Belford Bridge and along the front of the Dragonara Hotel (*which was built on the site of Bell’s Mills. Ed*) and a new footbridge would be built across the river and the pathway extended to Roseburn.

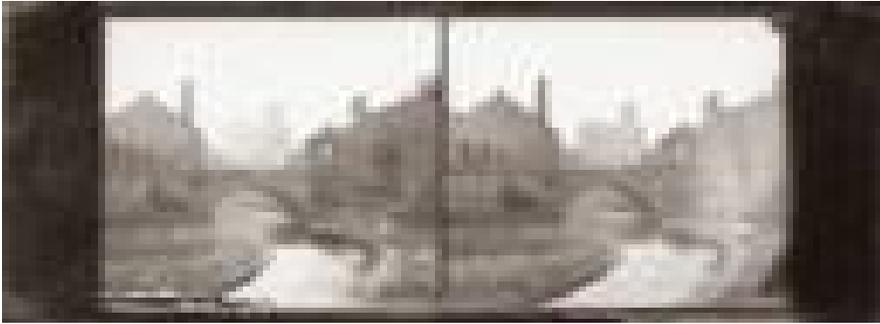
Occasionally, Dorothy Forrester would relate some snippet of the past history of Dean. Here is one relating to toll roads.

Belford Road was originally the old Queensferry Road that crossed the river by a ford at Bell’s Mills. The ford crossing was replaced by a bridge, which was originally at a low level and had to be raised when the road levels increased.

In the eighteenth century road improvements were financed by money from tolls. An Ordnance survey map of 1851 shows three tolls: - at the intersection of the old Queensferry Road with Ravelston Dykes (where the traffic lights are), one at Drumsheugh Toll (which was a turnpike gate and a collector’s cottage at the west end of Lynedoch Place), and at the junction of Dean Path with the new Queensferry Road

(Continued on page 5)

Dean Village Memories



Glass Negative: Thomas Begbie c. 1860

*View of Dean Village looking towards Holy Trinity Church
(with thanks to Alison Stoddart of the Central Library, Edinburgh)*

Patrick McCole (Dean Village Association Life Member) has been working on the Social History aspect of the village with the help of the staff based at the Central Library. Patrick's newly married parents moved to Well Court in the mid-1930s, initially to the basement flat at number 52 (with outside toilet) and then to flat number 6 (with inside toilet) on the other side of the Court. From this flat there was a great view of the centre of the village: - Playground, Damside, Dean Path, Burn's shop. His family rented this flat until 1997.

Over the years Patrick has collected stories, memories and photographs from those who once lived in the totally working class community of the Dean Village, primarily between the late 1920s and the mid-1970s. He set up the Dean Village Former Villagers Association in March 2013 and has been working with former villagers since then. He has arranged seven reunions and three Christmas lunches, attended by former villagers who come from far and wide. Patrick's desire to tell the stories of the families he knew as he grew up led to the creation of seven scrapbooks. Former villagers Kathleen Glancy, Alastair Forbes, Margaret Lee, Margaret Burke, Lynn Ridgway and Gail Featherstonehaugh tell their stories of growing up, happy schooldays, and holidays and daily and family life. Patrick has a list of thirty-two more people whom he would like to contribute.

Over two hundred Dean Village memories and the seven scrapbooks may be accessed on-line at www.edinburghcollected.org. Dean Village and its industrial heritage may be accessed on-line at ourtownstories and then following the links.

In 2014 Patrick met Robert “Rab” Hay who shared his recollections of working at Robert Legget & Sons Tannery in a series of films. The films and a large collection of photos are at capitalcollections.org.uk. If you have memories of Dean Village or Edinburgh it is easy to create an account and start sharing and adding them to *Edinburgh Collected*.

To get more information, or get involved, consult informationdigital@edinburgh.gov.uk

Patrick will be bringing along some old photos of the Dean Village of bygone days and will be talking about his memories after the AGM.

Any member with stories of old Dean, please write them down and send them to the Secretary. Also send photos and artefacts of interest. Because the Central Library has limited space we would like to hear from a volunteer who could store and look after memorabilia. The staff of the Central Library will provide suitable training in the matter of preservation of artefacts.

(Continued from page 3)

where there was only an entry box for collection.

The name Drumsheugh now appears on the house built for Charles Martin Hardie (1858 – 1916) by architect George Washington Browne. He built a handsome house for the artist featuring a studio with large north-facing windows. Thistles, eagles and the letter “H” on the rendering refer to the Scottish artist with his Polish wife. After his death another artist occupied the house – James Paterson RSA (1854 – 1932). After his death the house was split up. No. 1 Belford Road was occupied by sculptor James Clark and his wife until 1876. The lower part on Bell’s Brae was stables for cab horses on two levels, the upper one being accessed by a ramp. On Belford Road Waddell’s School of Music occupied the street floor, and the Edinburgh Society of Musicians the upper floor.

Dean Valley Regeneration Ltd.

Two studies have been completed which determine work that would be necessary to restore the environment of the valley of the Water of Leith between Stockbridge and Dean Village. A steering group has been formed consisting of the Trustees of DVRL and City of Edinburgh councillors. They will be considering such issues as carrying out further surveys concentrating on specialist areas, setting up an action plan to determine priorities, and developing a conservation management plan. Funds will be raised by applying for a Heritage Lottery Grant or from other sources.

The River Path Landslip.

The Dean Village Association has received further information about the landslip below Broomielaw House.

- The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) has raised legal proceedings against a number of parties in respect of the landslip.
- These proceedings have been paused pending further investigations by technical experts appointed by CEC and other parties respectively.
- Before steps can be taken to reopen the path, the causes of the slippage require to be identified and measures to prevent further slippage implemented.
- Public safety and future amenity of the area remain paramount.
- Technical investigations are progressing well and CEC is in close communication with all relevant parties to identify a suitable solution.
- Once a practical solution is identified it will require agreement between CEC and the neighbouring owner(s).

The “pause” comes to an end shortly and a decision taken on further procedure.

Past issues of Dean Village News

We are starting to put back-issues on the Dean Village website. Issues No 163 to 178 may be seen there now. Go to deanvillage.org/documents.

2019 Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the forty-eighth Annual General Meeting of the Dean Village Association to be held in the lounge of Lynedoch House at 23 Lynedoch Place in Belford Road on Tuesday 9th April at 7.30pm. All residents of Dean Village are welcome

Agenda

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of the forty-seventh AGM.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Acting Secretary's Report.
- 6 Treasurer's Report.
7. Election of Office Bearers:-
 - a) Chairman - Barry Mackay
 - b) Vice Chairman - Javier Albert
 - c) Secretary - Vacancy
 - d) Treasurer - Bob Morley
8. Election of Committee Members: -
Caroline Gerard, Charlie Hughes, Conrad Hughes, Don Jardine
Patrick McCole, David Perry, Pat Sinclair, Evelyn Whitfield.
9. Membership Fees.
10. Inverleith Partnership and NW Locality meetings.
11. Environmental matters.
12. Dean Village archives.
13. Village Fair.
14. Any other business.

There will be a break of 10 minutes.

There will now follow an illustrated talk by Patrick McCole about memories of past Dean.

Advertise in the Dean Village News

Quarter page £4

Half page £8

Full page £16

My Friends in the Cemetery XXXIV by David Ellwood Captain Archibald Donald MacKenzie (1914 - 1944)

Along the western wall of the old cemetery backing onto the Modern Art Gallery 2 are large family plots. One features the multi-talented members of the Mackenzie family. Here may be found a simple cross dedicated to the memory of a Captain of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, *killed 8th October 1944 near Piacenza, North Italy when in command of a force of Italian Partisans*. It is indeed a memorial, as Captain MacKenzie's body lies in a War Cemetery near Genoa. He was shot down by a Fascist patrol squad by chance, when mist lifted one morning as he led a group of partisans across a river. The Fascists couldn't know that they had extinguished the life of a distinguished British officer.

MacKenzie's story is told in a remarkable book, written and published by Shaun Hollis: *Captain's Courageous; Gunner Gregg, Donny MacKenzie, and the Liberation of the Nure Valley, 1944 (2014)*. He describes, in detail, MacKenzie's family background in the upper ranks of society and the army, his schooling in Winchester, his progression to read Classics at Oxford, thence straight into the army in 1936. By 1937 he had become a Staff Officer in Egypt and had learned colloquial Arabic. The early years of the war found him on staff duties in Libya, Cyprus and Palestine. Caught up in the disastrous evacuation of Greece and Crete in 1941, by May 1942 he was on the front line in the desert near El Alamein, fighting in terrible conditions. He was captured at the end of June.

Handed over to the Italians, he experienced a series of POW camps of the kind made famous by Eric Newby's *Love and War in the Apennines*. After the armistice of September 1943, the gates of the camps were opened. Men were free to choose: go north to Switzerland; through the mountains southwards to rejoin the Allied armies; or reach the nearest Resistance band of the kind which formed as soon as the Nazis completed their occupation of the country. But as Hollis writes, *without the help of friendly Italians nothing could have been achieved*. Many tales of this help would emerge, and MacKenzie - who chose the Resistance - was among the beneficiaries.

Spring and summer 1944 saw the height of Resistance activity, and MacKenzie's men, fighting in a long, south-running valley near Piacenza, were reinforced by one of the many officers of the Special Operations Executive in northern Italy, who helped supply them with arms, co-ordinated partisan activity, and liaised with the Allied armies. Alongside another escapee, "Gunner" Gregg, MacKenzie *worked, lived, slept, ate and fought with our soldiers*, whom they both respected highly. By late 1944 this force had liberated the whole of their valley, and took on running it, being careful not to be too audacious and so provoke the enemy into extreme violence. But it was after the local Fascists responded to a successful partisan raid on a small town. led by Gregg and MacKenzie, that Captain "Mac" met his fate. The residents immediately organised a huge and defiant funeral to pay their respects. Ceremonies of remembrance were held in 1969 and 2008, a monument dedicated, and he is remembered by his school, his college and his regiment.

But the finest memorial is given by Shaun Hollis in his unique narrative of heroism and sacrifice.

Editor's note: - Professor David Ellwood attended one of our cemetery walks last summer. He was struck by the memorial to Captain MacKenzie because the participation of this soldier in the activities of the partisans towards the end of the second world war formed a large part of his Ph.D. thesis. At the editor's request, he has produced this very fine article.

Professor Ellwood has lived in Italy continuously since 1978. He is Senior Adjunct Professor at John Hopkins University, SAIS Europe, Bologna where he has taught British and International history for the past 34 years. He has continued to follow the story of the Allies in Italy, publishing in 1985 "Italy 1943 – 1945, The Politics of Liberation", based on his Ph.D. thesis, and in 2018 "The Trauma of Liberation: Rape, Love and Violence in Wartime Italy" in PSAmbuco (ed.), and "Transmissions of Memory, Echoes, Traumas and Nostalgia in Post-World War II Italian Culture." He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute of Resistance and Contemporary History in Piedmont, based in Turin.

Changes in City of Edinburgh Governance.

The City of Edinburgh is divided into twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships: - City Centre, Leith, Craightonny and Duddingston, Portobello and Craigmillar, Liberton and Gilmerton, South Central, Southwest Edinburgh, Pentlands. Almond, Western Edinburgh, Forth and Inverleith. Dean Village is on the western edge of the Inverleith Partnership.

Until a few years ago there would be Partnership meetings several times each year, either at the Blackhall or Stockbridge libraries. These would be chaired in rotation by one of the Inverleith elected councillors. Attendees would include representatives of the police, the NHS, schools, businesses and various local organisations. Members of the public could attend and raise points of concern within the district. This method seemed to work very well. During that time the village gained a new playground, had Dean Path resurfaced and the sidewalks repaved. The use of black bags was replaced with bins. We had a handrail placed down the Convening Court steps, and unsightly tarmaced areas in the centre of the village replaced by setts.

Following the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the situation changed. The Neighbourhood Partnerships were amalgamated into four Neighbourhood Localities. Thus Forth and Inverleith were united into the Northwest Neighbourhood Locality. This represents a huge area, stretching from the western boundaries of Inverleith and Corstorphine out to the eastern city boundary at Queensferry. The object was that plans could be developed to help those people who are in the greatest need and advise on actions to improve the quality of life of those who live there. These new bodies now meet at the City Council Chambers. But the immediate contact one used to have with councillors seems to have been lost.

Edinburgh Partnership, which is the community planning body for the city, is undertaking a review of this area of city governance. Consultation with residents and organisations revealed that this way of working was too complicated. Consequently meetings of the Neighbourhood Localities took place in January. The aim was to come

up with a method of working which makes the Partnerships more open and accountable.

Edinburgh Partnership has come up with a plan which was discussed at these meetings. Four new locality community-planning partnerships (LCPPs) will be created. They will develop improvement plans for their area and will be accountable for the development and delivery of these plans. They will be accountable to the Edinburgh Partnership Board.

Neighbourhood networks will also be created. These will be at the smaller, local, level. Because they are closer to the communities in which they are established, they would be able to build effective and meaningful community participation. The networks would then report to their LCPP.

Following the consultations, Edinburgh Partnership will develop a new governance framework, taking into consideration all the points of interest raised. The new arrangements are planned to be in place by April 2019.

If you find all this a little mystifying then look on the Partnership website. Doubtless the Locality Service Manager will be able to enlighten you further.

Village Fair

The Dean Village Association would like to hold a village fair, along the lines of what used to happen forty years ago. The Fair could be held in the Playground at the corner of Dean Path and Damside, or, with the permission of residents, in Well Court.

We do need volunteers, firstly from someone who would be prepared to do the organisation. We would also need volunteers to man stalls, which could be refreshments, books, bric-a-brac, tombola etc. We would also need donations of material. Perhaps we could invite commercial stallholders such as those who go to Stockbridge Market.

Those interested please contact the Secretary, details on the back page, or by dropping a note through the letterbox at 22 Damside.

Planning matters.

Three planning applications concerning the property at 14 Belford Road are causing some concern among nearby residents. The applications may be seen by accessing the planning area of the City of Edinburgh website and entering the plan numbers as below: -

- **No. 19/00031/FUL:** - Change of use to domestic residential for two flats. Formation of new openings in gable end to create cycle store for existing office workers, and a smoking shelter on the Broad Stairs.
- **No. 19/00555/FUL:** - Change of use to self-centred holiday apartments sui generis use for single occupancy holiday letting. Formation of new openings as above.
- **No. 19/00550/FUL:** - Change of use to 38 bed hostel Use Class 7 (Hotels and Hostels). Formation of new openings as above.

A small group of neighbours and other interested parties including the Dean Village Association met on Monday 18th February. One of the main concerns was that three applications are in play with a lack of detail such as to make a sensible assessment difficult.

There were concerns on the invasion of privacy and increased noise and nuisance of either the thirty-eight holiday rooms, or the hostel, situated as they are in the middle of five sets of six tenement flats. Ownership issues regarding the entire basement area of the buildings were not clear. Visitors unfamiliar with the area would be arriving and departing at all hours during the day and night. These movements would not only disturb residents of 10 to 16 Belford Road, but also those living in the sheltered accommodation of Lynedoch House. Objections were also raised against extra windows and an entrance in the gable end, which would also be an invasion of privacy. The bicycle shelter would be situated halfway down the Broad Stairs, as would be the creation of a smoking shelter which would attract noise, nuisance and litter.

There have been many objections submitted before the closing date of 28th February. The decision of the Planning Committee is awaited.



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Events in Dean Village

Dean Village Association Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 9th in the lounge of Lynedoch House, starting at 7.30pm.

Dean Cemetery Walks will be conducted on Sundays 19th May, 23rd June and 28th July. Meet at the cemetery gates at the top of Dean Path at 2.30pm. £5 per person

Dean Village Walks will be held on Thursday 13th June, Tuesday 2nd July and Thursday 18th July. Meet at the top of Bell's Brae by Kirkbrae House on Dean Bridge at 7.15pm. £5 per person.

St. Bernard's Well will be opened from 12 noon till 3.00pm on the first Sundays of the summer months: - April 7th, May 5th, June 2nd, July 7th, August 4th and September 1st. All welcome, entry free, The Well will also be opened on Doors Open Sunday, September 29th, from 11am till 4.00pm.

Nature Notes by Tim Steiner

One advantage of the short winter days is always the chance to see some of our foxes. Where they live, I don't know, but they're often still about when I'm out of the house on a winter's morning. Look closely and you can see the paths they use through the undergrowth in locations throughout the village. Foxes have been one of the great adaptors to our urban environment, and some of the night-time shrieks and cries we hear will be them marking territory or keeping in touch with members of their earth (family group).

The vixens will be having their cubs about now. The cubs are apparently only about six centimetres long when they are born, and initially blind and helpless. Their mother will stay with them constantly for the first few weeks of their lives, relying on the father to bring food for her. Other family members will sometimes help him with that, and also care for the young.

My joy of the last few weeks has been to listen to the woodpeckers. I'm sure I've heard two this year, tapping away on the trees above Dean Path - they are easy to spot there too, at least until the tree leaves open. Ours are of the great spotted variety, I think, and peck to attract mates as well as search for food. Adapted skulls help cushion their brains from the force of the taps.

I write this piece at the end of the warmest February on record. It feels like spring is firmly established, but surely winter must come back to spite us. Pity the insects, animals and plants that were all fooled by the unseasonal warmth when it does. How many will suffer before spring proper arrives.

It's a *Braw* Café

After seven years we continue to supply Dean Village with a great selection of goodies. From our new customer service fridge we will help you select from milk, eggs, cheese, desserts, sandwiches, quiche, pies, salad boxes and much much more. As always, you can order whatever you need us to prepare for you 48 hours in advance. We are a small operation and so we are able to cater specifically for you.

At the beginning of June we will be open 7 days a week until 20.00hrs so that our outside seating can be enjoyed while the sun shines. Braw will take a short Easter break this year on the 13th and 14th April.

We look forward to seeing you.

Kind regards to all, Meg.

Dean Village News

This issue of the Dean Village News has been delivered to all households in Dean Village. If you are not a member and have enjoyed reading this issue, or found it useful or helpful in any way, you can help by joining the Dean Village Association and so assist in looking after our village. Yearly membership is £7 (£10 per couple) or life membership is £50 (£75 per couple). There is a concessionary annual rate of £3 single and £5 couple.

Dean Village Association

Committee 2018 - 2019

Chairman: Barry Mackay, chair@deanvillage.org

Vice-Chairman: Javier Albert,

Secretary: secretary@deanvillage.org

Treasurer: Bob Morley, treasurer@deanvillage.org

Membership Secretary: Caroline Gerard

e-mail:- membership@deanvillage.org

Committee members: Charlie Hughes, Conrad Hughes,
Don Jardine, David Perry, Pat Sinclair, Evelyn Whitfield

The deadline for articles for the next edition of
the News is

28th June 2019

If you would like to submit an article for the
News please e-mail the Secretary

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